The Collective of African American Women Photographers

Photographs By Sistagraphy Members
Atlanta, Georgia

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Photo Credit: Rick Banks

SISTAGRAPHY™

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Introduction

Collecting art has taken me on many journeys and brought me many joys. One of my real pleasures has been the discovery of an exciting photographic body of work by a unique coalition of photographers- a solid group of women banded together as "Sistas" of color, daring and courageously documenting Atlanta where most of them reside and most notably, the southern scene.

The one-of-a-kind group was founded as the result of efforts by Shelia Turner, who initially was concerned primarily with documenting aspects of African American life and culture. A spin-off, so to speak. of Zone III - an Atlanta based Black photographic workshop, "SISTAGRAPHY" contributes a unigue voice to the broader dialogue surrounding fine art photography. The subtle power of beauty and image captured by the lens of the "Sistas" crew reveals a steady growth of the diverse photographic group - the nation's single, active, and viable African American female photographic congregation.

SISTAGRAPHY has grown steadily over the five years since its inception, characterized by the exchanging of ides, exploration of camera techniques, workshops and mounting exhibitions. This group demonstrates dedication, a high level of energy, love and fascination for recording the various aspects of contemporary time. For this reason, it is important to collect and preserve their work.

On the many occasions of "Sistas" exhibitions, I have joined other viewers and collectors in partaking of the atmosphere and visual stimulus that make-up the "happening" experience of their opening. Having shown works extensively in Atlanta, various other locations in Georgia, they are now reaching New York audiences. I have been delighted to witness their joint and individual growth. The story of "SISTAGRAPHY" is a labor of love among women who apply diverse interest to a closely knit, singular purpose - capturing and preserving the time in which they live.

"SISTAGRAPHY" is an idea whose time has come.

Friends Of Sistagraphy

Hodgson Photo
Edith Biggers
Mr. and Mrs Joseph C. Yarbrough Jr
The Picture Lady Connie Cross
The Picture Lady Debra A. Mosley
LaShinda Clark
Turner and Adderley Family
Catherine Alston
Susan J. Ross
Mohamad & Ana Hansan
Harriet Sanford
Direct Wire Magazine
David Powell
Zone III Photographic Workshop
Instant Records Randall Petrie
D. T. Towner
Mary Waggoner
Beverly Vaughn
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Brenda Marshall Berry
Bruce James
Wendy E. Phillips
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Wayne Strother
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Cover Photo Credit: Rick Banks Photography

Pictured Group Shot: (Front Row Left) Sharon Dobson, Nafisa Valita Sheriff-Ali, Susan J Ross, Lee Towner, Catherine Alston (2nd Left) Julie Yarbrough, Sylvia Mc Afee, Wendy Phillips, Shelia Turner, Rachel Hill, Denise Gray, Edith Biggers, Jena Jones, Deirdre Watkins, Françesca Scott, (Back) Carolyn Hallmon, LaShinda Clark, Lewesa Major, Lisa Norfleet, Amanda Morris-May, (Not Pictured) Connie Cross, Debra Mosley, Barbara Bishop, Franita Ware, Iris King, Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier, Cheryl Miller,Treva Reed, T. Major Bey

Who We Are

Sistagraphy ™ *(sis-ta'-grah- fee) - an Atlanta, Georgia based group of African American sistas, all of whom document photographically the lives, joys, sorrows, people, places and events of their environments. A collective of African-American sista photographers who first came together in May 1993 at the invitation of Atlanta photographer Shelia Turner who envisioned a photographic exhibit highlighting the diverse range of works and contributions by local African-American women photographers.*

As a result, the first exhibit, in July of 1993, featured eight women photographers and 10 images. The exhibit opened at Atlanta's Frames 'n' Fine Art and was very well received. It was at this opening that Atlanta photographer Sue Ross affectionately named the group "SISTAGRAPHY ™ *."*

Since then Sistagraphy ™ *has produced several successful exhibits. We have grown in number and scope to include 35 members from novice to professional throughout the United States.*

For more information about joining contact: Sistagraphy™ *at*

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email: sistagrphy@aol.com

EXHIBITIONS

1998

"Gyration", Rush Gallery, New York City
"And Still We Rise", Atlanta Fulton County Library, Atlanta Georgia

1997

"Gyration," Hammonds House Galleries and Resource Center
"Members Exhibit," Black Light Cafe, DeKalb College, Decatur Georgia

1996

"Faces of the West End," Wachovia Bank, West End Bank
"Members Exhibit," Eddie's Attic, Decatur Georgia
"A Sampling of Sistagraphy," The Ellis-Chambers Gallery, Decatur Georgia
"And Still We Rise -How Women Photograph the South," M'Print Gallery, Atlanta Georgia
"From the Soul," Delta Sigma Theta House, Alumnae Chapter, Columbus Georgia

1995

"From the Soul: Women and their photography of music," M'Print Gallery, Atlanta Georgia
"Atlanta Women Worth Watching," Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Georgia

1994

"Members Show," West End Performing Arts Center, Atlanta Georgia
"Atlanta Women Worth Watching," Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta Georgia

1993

"An Exhibition of 9 Diverse Women Photographers," Frames 'n' Fine Art Gallery

Gyration

FISTAGRAPHY™

1997

.....a provocative photographic homage to dance

Exhibiting Sistas

Julie Yarbrough
Debra A. Mosley
Carolyn Hallmon
Catherine Alston
Sylvia McAfee
Barbara Bishop
Rachel Hill
Susan J. Ross
LaShinda Clark
Nafisa V. Sheriff-Ali
Edith Biggers
Denise Gray
Lisa Norfleet
Amanda Morris May
LeJohnnita Towner
Connie G. Cross
Wendy Phillips
Françesca Scott
Lewesa Major
Shelia Turner
T. Major Bey
Mikki Ferrill
Cheryl Miller
Sharon Dobson
Lynn Marshall-Linnemier

"Untitled"
Julie Yarbrough
Color Image on Canvas
20" X 24"

Spirits In Motion

Our spirits in motion propels
these uplifted souls
through the air
reaching stretching
up out
twisting turning
in around

Deliver yourself O soul of mine
through the
beat beat beating
of this drum called life
through the blowing of the horn
and the strum of the chord

Resonate the past present
and time to come
with passionate feet
moving swiftly then slow
carry me out of this weary land
I seek to be in bondage no more

My bodies limbs now live transformed
they are no longer mine
trembling rhythmically in reverence
at times erratic with jerks and sways
yet precise
perfected holiness

My eyes are blinded by the
pulsating expression
rising from deep within
a well of strength and discipline
rolling like high tide
upon Earth's shore

Sweet freedom has called me home

Recited at "Gyration" Opening by Simone Bell

"Jacob's Dance Academy"
Toward The Trophy 1
Le' Johnnita Towner
Silver Gelatin
8" X 10"

"Soul Train"
Shelia Turner
Mixed Media
27" X 17" X 16"

"Tapping in the Shadows" (Top)
LaShinda Clark
Silver Gelatin
11" X 14"

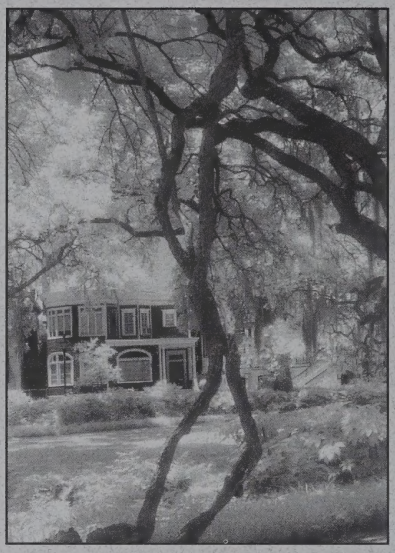
"Untitled" (detail) (Bottom)
Susan J. Ross
Silver Gelatin
16" X 20"

And Still We Rise SISTAGRAPHY™ 1996

.....How Women Photograph The South

Exhibiting Sistas

Julie Yarbrough
Debra A.. Mosley
Catherine Alston
Sylvia McAfee
Barbara Bishop
Susan J. Ross
Nafisa V. Sheriff-Ali
Lisa Norfleet
Amanda Morris May
Le'Johnnita Towner
Connie G. Cross
Jena P. Jones
Françesca Scott
Lewesa Major
Sheha Turner
T. Major Bey
Franita Ware
Cheryl Miller
Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier
Treva Reed



"Plantation Lullabies"
Debra A. Mosley
Silver Gelatin
21" X 25"

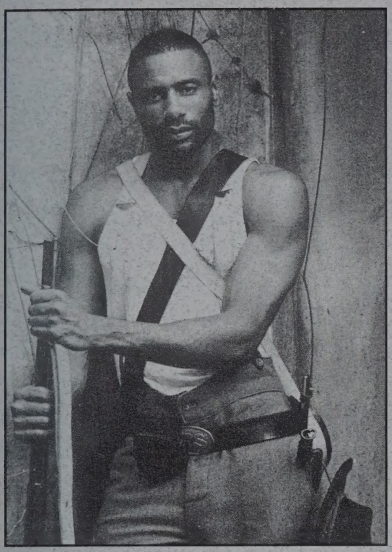
We are "Sistagraphy™ a group of women photographers. Through birth or migration, we have come to know or settle in this region-the American South.

We are as varied as our ancestors. Like the original occupants of this land, the Cherokee, the Creek and Seminole, we honor its natural beauty. This land can inspire even the most downtrodden soul.

In photographing the American South, we each walked separate paths which sometimes overlapped, very much like a quilt. We explored its unique traditions and gentle ways, its controversy, its conflicts. Through images both simple and complex, we attempted to explore our rich diversity and Southern heritage, reaffirming it in a way which might otherwise be taken for granted.

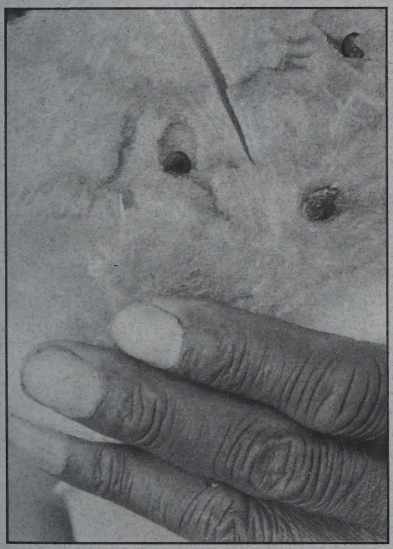
This exhibition represents the coming together of our paths, which eventually came to rest at a place known as "Inspiration". It is the same inspiration which sparked individuals such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Alice Walker, Maya Angelou and others. It is the same inspiration which heartened our ancestors to hold fast and push forward in the quest for human dignity and respect.

We are proud to present to you "And Still We Rise," our humble efforts to capture the essence of a very special pleace , which is ever changing. The world is coming to the South. It has truly come into its own. But we have known all along that it is a noble place-a place that we are proud to call home.



"Untitled"
Shelia Turner
Silver Gelatin
20 1/4" X 26"

"First African Baptist Church"
Catherine Alston
Color Print
18" X 16 1/4"



"Quest For Freedom" (Top)
Julie Yarbrough
Silver Gelatin
16" X 20"

"Vignettes of the Rural South: Food" (detail) (Bottom)
Le'Johnnita Towner
Silver Gelatin/Sepia Toned
5" X 7"

...From the Soul SISTAGRAPHY™ 1995

women and their photography of music

Exhibiting Sistas

Catherine Alston
Barbara Bishop
Connie Cross
Denise Gray
Allison Gay
Jena Jones
S Renée Kennedy
Penny Lawrence
Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier
Amanda Morris May
Sylvia McAfee
Cheryl Miller
Debra Mosley
Lisa Norfleet
Susan J. Ross
Françesca Scott
Lé'Johnnita Towner
Shelia Turner
Julie Yarbrough

"A Boy and His Horn"
Catherine Alston
Silver Gelatin
16" X 20"

We are the descendants of an oral tradition dating back thousands of years. In the most simplistic of terms, the stories and songs of tribal griots taught children about who they were and the importance of the Land. Spirits connected land, animals and people. Music, led by the beating drum, kept the rhythmic heartbeat of the Spirits who were our ancestors.

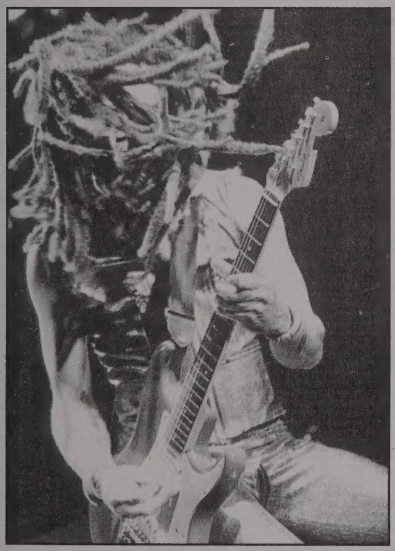
With our subsequent enslavement and introduction of a harsh new world, many of the stories were lost. The drum--the heart beat-- was forbidden. So we told, and eventually wrote down, new stories. Our clapping hands and stomping feet kept the heartbeat of our ancestors alive with each new generation.

The rhythms survived, the drum returned and today the heartbeats of our ancestors permeate almost every phase of modern music--the epitome of the universal sound and a testament to the perseverance and power of Spirit. Our music, our stories have served to inspire other oppressed peoples as we are a nation of black people endowed with the unique ability to conjure up our ancestral legacy -- a legacy our oppressors deemed invalid, and therefore subject to elimination. Our ancestors responded, calling us back to a time before time, inspiring us not to be moved, to stand firm.

It is to the African-American cultural tradition of "Keep On Keeping On" an inspiration conceived in and birth.....FROM THE SOUL, that the members of SistagraphyTM proudly dedicate this exhibition.

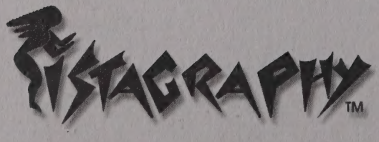
"Saxxy"
Debra A. Mosley
Color Print
11" X 14"

"Unforgettable"
Jena P. Jones
Color Print
11" X 14"



"Untitled" (Top)
Shelia Turner
Silver Gelatin
21" X 26"

"Feel the Joy" (detail) (Bottom)
Sylvia McAfee
Silver Gelatin
16" X 20"



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